

GLAST User's Group (GUG) Telecon

August 7, 2008

Present: Josh Grindlay (chair), Matthew Baring, Mitch Begelman, Henric Krawczynski, Luigi Piro, Scott Ransom, Pat Slane, Alicia Soderberg, Jim Ulvestad

Ex Officio Members: David Band, Neil Gehrels, Rick Harnden, Ilana Harrus, Julie McEnery, Chip Meegan, Peter Michelson, Steve Ritz, Chris Shrader, Dave Thompson

Staff: Sandy Barnes

Meeting called to order 11:03 am

NASA report—Rick

Ilana Harrus will take over as HQ Program Scientist on October 1. Rick will shadow her for 3 weeks before retiring. [Many thanks to Rick for all his help these years!]
The GLAST Fellows Program will be merged with the Chandra Fellows Program into the Einstein Fellows Program, one of three NASA science Fellows Programs. The funding for all fellows programs will be increased over the sum of the programs that were merged; the Einstein Fellows program will have two additional fellows, and will be broadened in scope. The Einstein program will be managed by the Chandra X-ray Center. Its peer panel will reflect the program's scope. The GLAST Fellows have been notified about the change. The current set of GLAST Fellows will not be affected, and they can call themselves either GLAST (or Fermi) or Einstein Fellows. The new program has been announced, with a deadline in ~November. The GUG members are concerned that the multiwavelength coverage of the Einstein Fellows Program be reflected in the peer panels and the choice of Fellows. Steve asked for any suggestions for peer panel candidates.

Mission report—Steve

GLAST is in a transition period between the development of the mission and routine operations. The mission is going very well. All the ground elements are working together very smoothly. Little issues that have popped are being resolved. On July 31 a bank of temperatures measured across the observatory fluctuated for 4 minutes; this was clearly a spurious anomaly (the temperature values were not real) that is still not completely understood. As a result of this anomaly, the spacecraft shut down the LAT. Once the temperature fluctuation was understood to be spurious, the LAT was turned back on. The spacecraft flight software has been changed so that the LAT will not be turned off for this type of anomaly.

The first-light media event was supposed to be earlier this week. But the renaming process at NASA has not been concluded, and the event was postponed. Between the Olympics and vacation season, Tuesday 8/26 has been chosen for the press conference. A press telecon was chosen as appropriate.

LAT—Peter

The LAT is working extremely well (as expected!). The first year survey officially starts next week. The release of the lightcurves of the 23 sources is on schedule for the end of August.

GBM—Chip

The GBM is also working as expected. The burst trigger has been enabled for 23 days and 22 bursts have been detected; the high rate is a result in part of the longer accumulation times. Some weak bursts have been in the LAT FOV; there have been coincidences with Swift and INTEGRAL.

GI Program—David

Cycle 1 is essentially done: the grants for the accepted proposals are on their way to the PIs' institutions, ahead of schedule. Now we are planning for Cycle 2. In response to the incomplete observation requests to the joint NRAO and NOAO programs in Cycle 1, proposers will be permitted to add a page to the science proposals describing their requested NRAO or NOAO observations in detail.

Rick—We will provide greater budget guidance for Cycle 2. A draft of the ROSES 08 amendment will be presented at the September GUG meeting (Cycle 2 will be part of ROSES 08, necessitating an amendment to the already released NASA Research Announcement).

SAE Beta Test—Chris

In early March the Beta Test version of the SAE tools was released. There were difficulties with supporting platforms; a dozen platforms were ultimately supported. Because of these difficulties the deadline for completion of the Beta Test was postponed twice. Approximately 15 testers provided a list of issues, and the GSSC is working its way through the list. Pat Slane and Luigi Piro were never able to install the tools, and would like to test the new releases. The GSSC was encouraged to work with both Pat and Luigi to enable their installations to proceed. There will be a more complete report at the September GUG meeting.

Huntsville GRB Meeting (October 20-23, 2008)—Chip

170 scientists have registered for the meeting, and the slots for talks (and posters?) are oversubscribed.

Issues for the September f2f (Sept. 26, 27 at GSFC)

Minor observatory idiosyncrasies affecting the observations, ROSES issues: description of the GBM's key projects; pointed observations; and research projects exclusive to the LAT.

There will be a MOC tour at the meeting, on Friday afternoon, Sept. 26.

Other Business

Mitch asked about the GLAST presence at the Long Beach AAS; there will be an invited talk, posters and booths.

Mitch asked about the number of Fellows permitted at an institution. Currently GLAST allows only 1 new Fellow at any given institution. The GUG is concerned about the number of Fellows that will be permitted at an institution. Rick commented that anyone who has strong feelings about this could send a concise summary of their concerns to Jon Morse and Wilt Sanders, with copies to Steve and Rick. The Einstein Fellows Program was announced via the AAS on Aug. 8.